

B-1 debuts at South Dakota museum

by 1st Lt. Elizabeth De Jesus
28th Bomb Wing Public Affairs

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Ellsworth has been home to the B-1B Lancer for more than 18 years, and for the first time, visitors to the South Dakota Air and Space Museum can view the aircraft up close.

The B-1 static display is the newest exhibit at the museum and was placed into its permanent position in front of the museum entrance Feb. 4.

"The B-1 exhibit (adds) to the museum and (lets) the public see a B-1 up close," said Tech. Sgt. Jason Kreutzer, of the 28th Civil Engineer Squadron.

Many Ellsworth spectators watched as two aircraft tow tractors moved the B-1 to the museum. Security forces had to redirect traffic to alternate routes during the move.

"It's not everyday you see a B-1 riding down (the road)," said Capt. Michael Johnson, 28th Bomb Wing's public affairs chief.

Airmen of the 28th CES removed street lights, power lines, street signs, fences near the base gate and the museum, and cleared things that could have obstructed the aircraft, Sergeant Kreutzer said.

"It (makes) a great addition to the historical aircraft at the museum," Captain Johnson said.

"The B-1 was acquired through the National Museum of the Air Force in 2003," said Ron Alley, the South Dakota museum's director. "We haven't had a B-1 at the museum before because none were available."

The bomber displays a few historical features including the "War Eagles" tail flash, the mascot of the 77th Bomb Squadron, which was inactivated at Ellsworth in September 2001.

The nose art "Lets Roll," which was an Air Force initiative after Sept. 11, 2001, is also painted on the aircraft, said Chief Master Sgt. Jerry Densmore, 28th Maintenance Group superintendent.

The 1983 aircraft model, previously assigned to Dyess Air Force Base, Texas, also displays the Ellsworth tail marking "EL."

Ellsworth officials received the aircraft in 2003 and began the parts-removal process, which took almost 18 months, on and off, to complete. The items removed from the jet included ejection seats, engines, radar and avionics.

Other work needed to prepare the display included 65 yards of concrete poured for the landing gear pads, Sergeant Kreutzer said.

Although the B-1 is on display, a sidewalk, curb, gutter and repairs to the driveway around the exhibit are still needed and are projected to be complete in April, Mr. Alley said.

A ribbon-cutting ceremony is scheduled for May.



ELLSWORTH AIR FORCE BASE, S.D. -- Airmen move a B-1B Lancer is moved from the flightline here to the South Dakota Air and Space Museum for a permanent display. (U.S. Air Force photo by 1st Lt. Elizabeth De Jesus)

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